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Viewing cable 09BOGOTA3585, Charge Discusses Venezuela, Ecuador and Mercosur with Acting

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09BOGOTA3585**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09BOGOTA3585	2009-12-21 14:05	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET//NOFORN	Embassy Bogota

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.eluniverso.com/2011/04/09/1/1355/cable-240964.html>

VZCZCXYZ1745
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #3585/01 3551405
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 211405Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1685
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0028
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 0624
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

S E C R E T BOGOTA 003585

NOFORN

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/12/21

TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [MARR](#) [ENRG](#) [PREF](#) [CO](#) [VE](#) [EC](#) [UY](#)

SUBJECT: Charge Discusses Venezuela, Ecuador and Mercosur with Acting Foreign Minister

CLASSIFIED BY: Brian A. Nicho...

id: 240964
date: 12/21/2009 14:05
refid: 09BOGOTA3585
origin: Embassy Bogota
classification: SECRET//NOFORN
destination:
header:
VZCZCXYZ1745
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #3585/01 3551405
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
R 211405Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1685
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0028
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 0624
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

----- header ends -----

S E C R E T BOGOTA 003585

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/12/21

TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [MARR](#) [ENRG](#) [PREF](#) [CO](#) [VE](#) [EC](#) [UY](#)

SUBJECT: Charge Discusses Venezuela, Ecuador and Mercosur with Acting Foreign Minister

CLASSIFIED BY: Brian A. Nichols, Deputy Chief of Mission; REASON:
1.4(B), (D)

Summary

¶1. (C) Acting Foreign Minister Clemencia Forero told the Charge on December 18 that the GOC had sent a letter to UN Security Council members responding to Venezuela's call for a discussion on the alleged international threat posed by Colombia's security problems. The letter was intended to give UNSC members the facts and full picture necessary to dismiss Venezuela's request. Forero said the GOC was concerned that the worsening domestic situation in Venezuela would lead Chavez to do something rash. She also complained of BRV harassment of Colombian consuls outside of Caracas. Turning to Ecuador, Forero said the GOC was taking great care to keep rapprochement on track, and would supply energy to relieve some of Ecuador's shortage. The recently appointed Ecuadoran Charge told us the same day that the two countries had made good progress on the roadmap announced by both Foreign Ministers in New York in September, but estimated it would be at least a year before Ecuador was ready to name an Ambassador to Colombia. Scanning the rest of the region, the Colombian MFA was pleased that MERCOSUR members had abandoned Chavez' continued

criticism of the U.S.-Colombia Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) and hoped Uruguayan President-Elect Jose Mujica would prove to be a pragmatic leader the GOC could work with. End Summary.

Discrediting Venezuela's UNSC Ploy

¶2. (S) Acting Foreign Minister Clemencia Forero requested a meeting December 18 with Charge d'Affaires to explain the letter the GOC sent to UN Security Council members in response to Venezuela's call for a UNSC discussion on the alleged international threat posed by Colombia's security problems. Forero said it was clear that Venezuela submitted the petition to divert attention from Venezuela's internal problems and aggressive posture towards Colombia. She explained the GOC sent its letter so that UNSC members that do not follow Colombia closely would have the facts and full picture necessary to dismiss Venezuela's request. She hoped that the issue would fade, and said the GOC would not escalate the argument further. The Charge replied that the USG supported Colombia's position, and that it seemed most UNSC members saw through Venezuela's ploy.

Besieged Chavez Could Do Something Rash

¶3. (S/NF) Forero said that the GOC and some "intelligent" Venezuelan contacts (including former minister Asdrubal Aguiar) were concerned that the worsening domestic situation in Venezuela (crime, press freedoms, banks, corruption, food, etc.) would lead President Hugo Chavez to do something rash out of desperation. Forero said the GOC was considering whether to invoke the still-in-force bilateral 1939 Treaty on Non-Aggression, Conciliation, Arbitration, and Judicial Resolution (ratified in 1941 by Colombia and Venezuela) to help dissuade Venezuela from any aggressive actions. The treaty stipulates a conciliation commission and several mediation steps culminating with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague to avoid conflict. Forero said Chavez might not be aware of the treaty and that Venezuela has historically disliked being a party to ICJ cases. She said the GOC was keeping the treaty in its pocket pending further analysis, and asked us not to raise it with others at this point.

¶4. (S) Forero noted that BRV support for the FARC continued, citing the incorporation of the FARC into Chavez' Bolivarian Continental Movement. She also complained that Colombian consuls in cities like Valencia, Merida, and Barinas were being harassed, restricted in their travel and access (especially near the border), and even threatened with PNG declarations. The harassment included daily protests, heckling and loudspeakers blasting anti-Colombian sentiments at the consulate. The BRV was not renewing some

consuls' visas (though the BRV did grant pending visas for diplomats assigned to the Embassy in Caracas). Charge noted that the BRV also restricted the travel of U.S. diplomats to the border area and suggested that the aggrieved consuls share their experiences to the U.S. Embassy in Caracas if possible.

GOC Nurturing Improved Relations with Ecuador

¶5. (C) Forero said the GOC was very pleased with the improving relationship with Ecuador, and was caring for it like one would "a premature baby." She called good relations with Ecuador "fundamental" for Colombia, adding that Colombia hoped to keep Ecuador from Chavez' grasp. She said it was rumored that Ecuadorian Foreign Minister Fander Falconi would be stepping down soon, which would be a huge blow given his professionalism and constructive disposition. Forero said Colombia agreed to help Ecuador with its current energy shortages. Though Colombia could not provide all of the energy Ecuador needed for technical and domestic consumption reasons, it would provide a much energy as it could to help alleviate what seemed to be a serious problem.

¶6. (C) Charge met separately with Andres Teran, Ecuador's Charge in Colombia (arrived November 23 after diplomatic relations were reestablished), and his Political Counselor on November 18. Teran

said he had been very well received by the GOC and highlighted the resumption of the joint border committee (COMBIFRON), direct mil-mil dialogue, and two meetings on sensitive issues as signs of an improving relationship. He arranged a meeting between both countries' Ministers of Energy in Medellin on December 17 where the GOC was very generous in offering a permanent and stable supply of energy to Ecuador to alleviate its energy shortage. He said talks aiming to further improve relations were paused for the holidays, but would resume in January. Teran thought that it would be at least a year before Ecuador would be ready to name an Ambassador to Colombia, as the points in the September roadmap had to be completed first. The Charges discussed the difficult situation along the border, with Charge Nichols offering USG cooperation, especially with Colombian refugees. Teran said Ecuador also valued its relationship with the United States, and praised the bilateral dialogue series and Embassy Quito.

MERCOSUR Abandoned Chavez' DCA Complaints

17. (S) Forero said the GOC was satisfied that the swell of MERCOSUR criticism of the U.S.-Colombia Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) had subsided. She said Brazil had come to terms with the agreement and that MERCOSUR was fed up with Chavez' ranting, leaving Venezuela alone in its alarmist declarations. Forero cited good cooperation with Paraguay and Uruguay, though expressed some concern over the unknowns regarding Uruguayan president-elect Jose Mujica's leanings. She said Mujica seemed to have put his checkered past behind him, but that his congresswoman wife was "very radical."

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=====CABLE ENDS=====